

Burnham-on-Sea
Urban District Council



*Medical Officer's
Annual Report*



1950

ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH
FOR THE YEAR 1950.

To the Chairman and Members of the Burnham-on-Sea Urban District Council.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have pleasure in presenting to you my seventh Annual Report and the thirty-sixth in the series of Medical Officers Reports of the Area.

I do not know how much longer your Council will have its own Annual Health Report; as you know there are rumours in the air of your Health and Sanitary Departments being absorbed by a neighbouring Authority; in which case, I regret to say, these Reports will cease.

This Report, which is for the year 1950, generally follows routine line and it sets out in detail all the necessary information. You will notice that, for the first time, in the Statistical part of this Annual Report, there are changes in practice, which arise from the implementation of The World Health Organisation Nomenclature Regulations 1948. The purpose of these Regulations is to ensure as far as is possible, the uniformity and comparability of Statistics of Diseases and Causes of Death.

The Health of our Urban District has been good and the Public Health Services have been efficiently maintained.

I am, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

GEOFFREY B. EGERTON.

Medical Officer of Health.

August 1951.

STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA.

Area (including foreshore) = 2,246 acres.

Population:—

1931 Census	...	...	...	...	...	...	7,705
Registrar General's Estimate for 1950	...	...	...	...	...	...	9,276

Rateable Value = £69,194.

Sum represented by a penny rate = £277. 12s. 7d.

INDUSTRIES.

The chief industries in the Area are: Brick and Tile Works, Timber Yard, Bacon Factory, Boat and Yacht Building and Repairing Yard, Perambulator Canopy and Perambulator Rug Factory, Laundry, Creamery, Returned Stores Depot, and a Factory where are made Imitation Jewellery, Small Castings, Stamps, and where, in addition, Electro-Plating is done.

STATISTICAL SUMMARY 1950.

Live Births:—	Male	Female	Total
Legitimate	72	59	131
Illegitimate	6	3	9

140

Still Births:—	Male	Female	Total
Legitimate	2	0	2
Illegitimate	0	0	0

2

Birth Rate:— 15.09 per 1,000.

	Male	Female	Total
Deaths:—	58	72	130

Death Rate:— 14.01 per 1,000.

Deaths of Infants under 1 year of age:— 3 Male Legitimate.

Deaths of Infants under 4 weeks of age:— 1 Male Legitimate.

VITAL STATISTICS.

REGISTERED BIRTHS. After allowing for Outward and Inward Transfers, the Registrar General credited this Urban District with 140 Live Births for 1950:— 78 males and 62 females; of these 9 were Illegitimate (6 males and 3 females).

The Registered number of Still-births was 2, both males; there were no Illegitimate Still-births.

The Birth Rate for 1950 was 15.09 per 1,000 of the population; this is higher than for the previous year (13.5) and only very slightly lower than that for the Country as a whole (15.8).

DEATHS. 130 were registered as having occurred in the Urban District during the year; of these 58 were males and 72 were females.

The number of deaths in the four quarters of the year were:—
First quarter 51; second quarter 31; third quarter 22; fourth quarter 26.

There were 3 deaths of Infants under 1 year of age; and 1 death of an Infant under 4 weeks of age.

The following table shows the causes of death:—

All causes	...	...	...	Male 58	Female 72
Tuberculosis, Respiratory				0	0
Tuberculosis, Other				0	0
Syphilitic Disease				1	1
Diphtheria				0	0
Whooping Cough				0	0
Meningococcal Infections				0	0
Acute Poliomyelitis				1	0
Measles				0	0
Other Infective and Parasitic Diseases				0	0
Malignant Neoplasm—Stomach				1	2
Malignant Neoplasm—Lung & Bronchus				2	1
Malignant Neoplasm—Breast				0	3
Malignant Neoplasm—Uterus				0	0
Other Malignant and Lymphatic Neoplasm				6	5
Leukaemia, Aleukaemia				1	0
Diabetes				2	0
Vascular Lesions of Nervous System				6	9
Coronary Disease, Angina				9	9
Hypertension with Heart Disease				0	1
Other Heart Disease				7	23
Other Circulatory Disease				3	1
Influenza				2	2
Pneumonia				3	2
Bronchitis				5	2
Other Diseases of Respiratory System				0	3
Ulcer of Stomach and Duodenum				0	0
Gastro-Enteritis and Diarrhoea				1	0
Nephritis and Nephrosis				0	3
Hyperplasia of Prostate				1	0
Pregnancy, Childbirth and Abortion				0	0
Congenital Malformations				0	0
Other Defined and Ill-Defined Diseases				6	5
Motor Vehicle Accidents				0	0
All other accidents				1	0
Suicide				0	0
Homicide and Operations of War				0	0

It will be seen from the foregoing table that Diseases of the Heart and Blood-Vessels was the chief cause of death, followed closely by Diseases of the Blood-Vessels of the Nervous System.

INFECTIOUS AND OTHER NOTIFIABLE DISEASES.

Disease	Total Cases Notified	Cases admitted to Hospital	Total Deaths
Tuberculosis, Respiratory	6	—	—
Tuberculosis, other	3	—	—
Measles	29	—	—
Scarlet Fever	3	1	—
Whooping Cough	54	—	—
Acute Pneumonia	9	1	—
Acute Poliomyelitis 1 Paralytic	5	5	1
2 Non-Paralytic	3	3	—
Acute Encephalitis—Post-Infectious following Influenza	1	1	—
Erysipelas	3	1	—

The year was free from any serious epidemics, although we had some 8 cases of Acute Poliomyelitis: 5 of them severe, with one death, the remaining 3 were of the Non-Paralytic type.

TUBERCULOSIS.

There were 9 new cases notified during the year. Six affected the Respiratory System, while the remaining 3 affected other sites. There were no deaths from this disease during the year.

FOOD POISONING OUTBREAKS.

There was no case of Food Poisoning notified in this area during the year under review.

DIPHTHERIA IMMUNISATION.

The number of children immunised in the Area of this Authority was:—Under 5 years of age, 50; 5—15 years of age, 49; making a total of 99.

The number of children in the area of this Council, who were in an immunised state at the end of 1950 was 1,156.

No case of Diphtheria was notified in this area during the year. To show how vitally necessary Diphtheria Immunisation is, here are a few facts.

In 1949 (the latest full year for which a total is available) there were 85 deaths from Diphtheria in this country compared with an average of about 2,000 deaths annually in the 10 year period 1931-1940. For the 8th year in succession, therefore, the number of deaths was the lowest ever recorded. Apart from the avoidance of unnecessary suffering, this has resulted in substantial savings in hospital costs, and has freed medical and nursing personnel for other work.

As has been emphasised in previous years, the principal object of the immunisation campaign remains the same, i.e. to secure that at least 75 per cent of babies are immunised before the end of the first year of life.

Immunisation is available in this area, through the Family Doctor, in addition to the facilities provided at the Welfare Centres at Burnham-on-Sea and Highbridge.

SECTION 47 OF THE NATIONAL ASSISTANCE ACT, 1948.

This section provides for the removal to a suitable place, of persons, who are in need of care and attention through age or disease. It was not found necessary to take any action under this section during the year 1950.

GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES FOR THE AREA.

I. Public Health Officers of the Authority:—

Medical Officer of Health: Dr. G. B. Egerton, M.C., M.B., B.S.

Surveyor: J. M. M. Huxtable, M.I.Mun.E., M.R.S.I., A.I.W.E.

Sanitary Inspector: W. B. Graham, M.R.S.I., M.S.I.A.

II. (a) Laboratory Facilities—The Public Health Laboratory Service, Taunton.

(b) Ambulance Facilities—The St. John Ambulance Brigade, stationed at Highbridge and staffed by voluntary workers, both male and female, of the St. John Ambulance Brigade and under the control of the Somerset County Council.

(c) Nursing—Two District Nurses in both Burnham-on-Sea and Highbridge directly controlled by the County Council; while the two local voluntary committees retain their interest in the nursing service and accept certain responsibilities in connection with the welfare of the Nurses.

(d) Clinics—The Infant and Child Welfare Centres held (a) in Burnham-on-Sea on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays in the month at the Church Hall, and (b) in Highbridge on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays in the month at the St. John Ambulance Brigade Headquarters.

HOUSING.

Eleven houses were erected during the year; 4 by the Local Authority and 7 by Private Enterprise, all 11 houses were permanent.

In course of erection were a further 87 permanent houses—84 by the Local Authority and 3 by Private Enterprise. Four permanent additional units were provided in Flats or Dwellings. A few owner occupiers have had additional bedrooms and bathrooms constructed, and houses, which became vacant, have been reconditioned and improved ready for occupation, without Government Assistance.

The Total Number of Post-War Houses Completed was (i) 124 by the Council, and (ii) 76 by Private Enterprise.

I have previously mentioned the hardships imposed on many elderly persons, and I have in mind a piece of land in Clyce Road, Highbridge, which might well be acquired, with the view to the erection thereon of two-roomed bungalows suitable for such old people, where they could spend the evening of their lives in comfortable surroundings. In addition, such a development would utilise the new sewer outfalls, which will have to be constructed there, and, which, has already been brought to your notice.

The Number of Houses required—where conditions are unsatisfactory, such as—2 families living in the same house—is 240.

The Total Number of applicants for Council Houses at the end of 1950 was 475.

SANITARY WORK.

Before recording this part of the Public Health Work of an Urban District, I wish to state that the duties of the Sanitary Inspector are becoming increasingly important, particularly in connection with food inspection; and, with the operation of food bye-laws, this will be all the more emphasised. I hope to see the position of this responsible office brought into line with the other statutory offices of the Council, with full allowances for travelling, so that he can maintain his rightful place in the local government executive.

It should be borne in mind that the Sanitary Inspector often has to settle disputes between house-owners and tenants, or between neighbours. The duties are sometimes unpleasant, requiring the exercise of much caution and tact, and it is only with long experience that the officer concerned learns to conduct the enquiries necessary and settle matters without recourse to statutory action.

SANITARY WORK.

(1) WATER SUPPLY.

The water supply of this Urban District has been satisfactory in quality and quantity. There were slack periods during the summer, but supplies were not cut. There was ample water at source and a new scheme has been approved for large mains and machinery, including a new borehole.

PIPED SUPPLIES—The results of samples taken for analysis.

(1) Raw Water. 8 samples were satisfactory and 1 unsatisfactory bacteriologically.

(2) Water treated after going into Supply—22 samples were satisfactory and none unsatisfactory.

No action was necessary re plumbo-solvent action of the water.

All houses within the boundaries of the Urban District—our population is 9,276—are supplied from public water mains direct to the houses; none are supplied by means of stand-pipes.

No extension of public water supplies was undertaken during the year. We have no houses relying on wells for their water supply.

(2) MILK SUPPLY.

(a) The number of Registered Dairies is 4.

(This excludes the West of England Creamery, licensed by S.C.C., and which has a Pasteurising Plant).

(b) Number of Retailers in the area is 9.

(c) Number of Supplementary Licences or Registrations issued to dealers or distributors, whose dairy is outside our area, is 4.

MILK SAMPLING.

63 samples of Tuberculin Tested milk were taken, with 58 satisfactory and 5 unsatisfactory.

47 samples of Pasteurised Milk were taken, all of which were found to be satisfactory.

21 samples were taken for Biological Sampling with 21 Negative results and no Positive results.

(3) ICE CREAM.

The number of premises registered for manufacture and sale 5

(a) For manufacture only 0

(b) For retail only 30

The number of samples taken is as follows:—

	Hot Mix	Cold Mix
Grade 1	62	12
Grade 2	5	—
Grade 3	3	1
Grade 4	7	3

Sampling results have proved that standards of cleanliness are well maintained and that faults have been rectified.

(4) SLAUGHTER HOUSES.

There is 1 in use under the Ministry of Food (this is at the Highbridge Bacon Co. Ltd.); we have no Slaughter House in use where horses are slaughtered for human consumption.

The total number of animals slaughtered during the year was 43,958.

The approximate weight of meat condemned was:—

(1) For Tuberculosis 1,392 lbs. (2) For other causes 3,824 lbs.

(5) PREMISES WHERE FOOD IS PREPARED.

The number registered under Section 14 of the Food and Drugs Act, 1938, is 14.

(6) MODEL BYE-LAWS SERIES I (Ministry of Food).

These are at present awaiting the Council's decision.

(7) KNACKERS YARDS.

One Knackers Yard is registered in this district.

(8) SEWAGE DISPOSAL.

The whole district, except for a few isolated cases, has main drainage and efficient disposal system; the exceptions are Stoddens Road and the Isleport area, which have no sewerage systems.

No extensions of sewers, new works or improvements were carried out during the year.

Re the Clyce Road outfalls:— A settlement about these outfalls is hoped for in the near future. Otherwise, there is no alternative left for the Council but to extend these outfalls to a suitable point of discharge.

(9) RIVER POLLUTION.

There were no cases of River Pollution dealt with during the year.

(10) CAMPING SITES.

- | | | | | | | | | |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| (a) Number of camping sites for which licences have been issued | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 |
| (b) Maximum number allowed per acre | ... | ... | | | | | | 30 |
| (c) Period of occupation—All the year (about 10% during Winter months). | | | | | | | | |
| (d) Estimated maximum number of campers residing during Summer Season | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 350 |

(11) CLOSET ACCOMMODATION.

The total number in the district on December 31st, 1950 was 1 house with a Pail Closet.

All other houses have the water-carriage system.

There was 1 conversion to water-carriage system during the year.

(12) PUBLIC CLEANSING.

House Refuse is removed by Direct Labour; two Scammell lorries are employed. There is a weekly collection covering the whole area. The following scheme for the collection of Trade Refuse is operated in this area, viz. a free weekly service, except for offal, which is collected daily, if required, and charged for.

This House and Trade Refuse is disposed of at one Controlled Tip; we have no uncontrolled Tips; and the Incinerator, which we possess, is not used.

(13) PUBLIC SWIMMING BATHS AND POOLS.

There are none in this area, either owned privately, or by the Local Authority.

I finish this Annual Report, Ladies and Gentlemen, with an acknowledgment of the help received throughout the year, from Mr. Huxtable, the Surveyor, and Mr. Graham, the Sanitary Inspector.

